1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

dinner pipe, an indispensable part of the meal for them. The children may sometimes not come to the table but eat sitting upon the settle or the hearth seats. They are very silent children. They take little part in the family discussion between older members unless questioned directly.

After dinner the men return to their work. The women begin their household and farmyard tasks anew. The fowl have grown so hungry, meanwhile, that they are invading the kitchen and the woman must "hunt" them out of the house. From what remains of the pot of potatoes (which may often hold as much as forty pounds) she feeds them and feeds, too, the household pets. They eat what the family eats, though meat comes their way only upon special occasions.

This done, the woman's chores for the afternoon are much the same as those of the morning. Another large pot of potatoes, mangels, and turnips must be prepared for the pigs, more milk and grain mixed and fed to the calves, turf brought in for the fire, water fetched from the well, and rooms cleaned and swept, in an endless cycle of activity. Should the routine duties come to a pause, there is still always plenty to do in washing, mending, and knitting the clothes of the household. The woman's hands are never idle.

There is another important daily activity within the house. The great staple, bread, is baked daily into round cakes or loaves upon the "griddle," an iron tripod, on the hearth. The woman may bake at any time during the day and, if necessary, more than once. Even late in the evening, when the whole family is gathered round the fire, her last task may be to bake bread for late evening tea.

After four in the "evening" (as the countryman divides the day), the children arrive from school and must be fed. The woman sits down with them, talking over the happenings of the day, for children are important purveyors of news.

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

341 called the first type *the central-chimney house,* because the chimney will be erected over the fire-place somewhere about the middle of the roof, (fig. 1 and pl. XLI: 1, 2, 3 ; the second *the gable chimney house* because here the chimney will be close to the gable often being built as a part of the stone-built gable (fig. 2 and pl. XLI: 2). The outside chimney then not seldom forms a pronounced gabletop or gable-finial.

The Central-chimney house.

342 Some of the most primitive houses I found in Ireland belong to the central chimney house type. To illustrate I choose a house from Spiddle, Co. Galway (fig. 3 and pl. XLI: 1). The house is said to have been built before 1839 and to have withstood the "big wind" of that year. How old it actually is I had no means of discovering. The walls are of stone with the mortar put on afterwards on the inside and outside, but not used in the actual construction of the walls. Some outhouses belonging to this farm are all of dry wall construction. The roof of straw rests on couples of beams, supported on the inner edge of the walls, so that the thatch does not quite reach as far as the outside edge of the wall, but leaves a narrow space uncovered.
[171] This is an archaic feature found now in very old buildings in Ireland, as always in the black houses of Scotland.

The house is built on a slope, so that the fireplace end of the house lies higher than the entrance door. There is only one room, but a low partition wall at the back of the fire cuts off a section which is used as a bedroom.
[352] In the lower end of the house a dresser is placed so that it together with a small table cuts off another section that nowadays is also used as a bedroom. Some stools, a cradle and a churn are the other contents. There are two doors opposite of each other, both provided with half-doors. The fireplace consists of some flat stones on the floor. Over the fireplace there is a
[354] wattled chimney resting on two beams, supported by a cross beam. The chimney is adapted to a hole in the thatched roof, so there is no outside chimney. On one side of the house, the sheltered side, there are two windows.

About other houses of the same kind, I have heard from the inhabitants
[231] that in olden times the lower end of the house was used for the cattle. In late times the cattle have been removed to an outhouse and this part of the house has been adopted as a living room.

342 The division of the house into three sections, which is characteristic of the
171 central-chimney house type, is quite clear in the Scottish houses, namely the black houses, the bedroom being at the upper end of the house behind the

[Text continues top of p. 211]

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

342 fire, and the byre at the lower end of the house. In the Welsh long-house
171 the hearth generally seems to face the living room and bedroom part of the house, and cuts these sections from the byre part. The two doors, opposite to each other, very typical of the Irish house (see p. 217), are also found in the Welsh long-houses, but here the space between the two doors has a more pronounced feeding-walk character, than we find common in Ireland, at least to-day when the cattle are generally removed from the dwelling house. For the three sections of some South Scandinavian houses see p. 222.

The gable-chimney house.

342 In various parts of Ireland I have found numbers of primitive houses with stone-built gables. These houses are always rectangular in form, never oval. Externally the type varies greatly depending mostly on the prevailing wind. On the coast, in very windy districts, the roof will not be built very high, but in more sheltered parts, it will be more lofty.

The gable finial, the gable top often consitutes a very characteristic feature of this house-type, pl. XLII: 2. Only where the low roof is used, the gable top is not especially accentuated. The outside chimney constitutes the gable
[341] top of the chimney-gable. On the opposite gable the gable-finial may be formed in a corresponding way, as a chimneyshaft without any flue. The chimney-shafts at the gables form perhaps the single example in the Irish peasant house of intentional architecture conforming with a wide-spread custom in Western Europe. As regards the serrated gable-ends see p. 226.

342 In small dwellings of this type there is only one room, the fireplace is si-
● 354 tuated against one gable-wall. The most convenient place for the beds is be-
352 side the fire, and at least one bed is to be found here. This is a very original feature of this house-type which is confirmed by Scottish material, old Irish descriptions, and even drawings. In the middle-west and north of Ireland, the bed is built in a projection outwards, *cailleach,* or at least in a niche in the side wall close to the fireplace, pl. XLII: 2, as in the Scottish *tig dubh.*

342 As in the central-chimney house, there are sometimes two doors opposite each other, but even a single door is common in small old houses.

Windows have come at a later period here also. In old-fashioned houses there is generally only one window, sometimes none at all.

342 At the lower end of the house, there was in more remote times place for
231 domestic animals. The division of the room by means of the dresser may have been adopted at an early stage, the dresser being especially suitable as

342 231 a kind of partition. When the domestic animals were removed, often to an additional building at the gablewall, this part of the house would be used as a living room, just as in the former type of house, fig. 4. In a few very primitive houses of this as well as of the foregoing type I have found fireplaces with no chimney at all, the smoke leaving the house through a hole in the roof above the fireplace. Sometimes I have found two smoke holes, one in each end of the roof. The doors and half doors constitute together with the smokeholes a complicated machinery, providing the current of air to regulate the turf-fire and the smoke.

342 354

Dwelling houses without chimneys were found by me in 1935 at Belmullet, Co. Mayo and in Co. Sligo.

342 The houses with thatched gables sometimes have rounded corners so that the base foundation may have an almost oval shape on the outside, while the inside room may be rectangular in form, pl. XLIII: 2. It is evident that the oval house form and the thatched gables complement each other. They could have existed together from a very early stage in building traditions. In a windy district the rounded and thatched gables are suitable, as the house will be more stream lined.

The roof with a thatched gable can easily have replaced the stone, or cyclopic roof, in cabins and huts (both, bothán). This fact and certain similarities would seem to indicate that the oval house form in the abovementioned houses with thatched gables, may have developed from the round [171] or beehive house type. Parallels may be found among the stone-built huts with similar roofs in Estremadura and elsewhere.

On the other hand, houses with stone-built gables represent quite clearly the rectangular house type, as in such constructions the gables are never rounded.

342 346 The stone-built gable constitutes a very practical way of solving the problem of how to protect the gable ends of the roof of an oblong house against the wind, pl. XLIV: 3. But there is another point to be considered. In mediæval houses in villages and cities, the gables have often developed according to the use and importance of the gable wall; when the house faces the street or main road the gable wall would be far more important than the side walls. Other features point to ecclesiastical architecture. In the early churches, in Ireland and elsewhere, the gable wall constituted the front wall. In Ireland the early primitive churches were often furnished with pronounced gable finials. Furthermore it has been suggested that the introduction of the rectangular form of house is due to the first propagators of Christianity

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 771 as a result of certain circumstances, such as social organisation, the demands and standard of the aristocracy, the clan, and the family etc. — introduced in Ireland, Scandinavia and other parts of Europe. This appears from some prehistoric materials as for example the Gall Arus near Dingle, Co. Kerry, and the so-called "kämpagravshuset" and the Viking Hall in Scandinavia.

Some of the features mentioned above in the descriptions of the central chimney-house and the gable-chimney house are common to nearly all primitive recent Irish houses.

342 354 It is especially interesting to notice the practice of providing two doorways, central and opposite, fig. 1, 3 and 4. In recent Irish houses the front door is called *doras tosaigh*, and the backdoor *doras cúl*. In Donegal however, I was told that the front door was called *doras an fhosgaidh*, door of the shelter, and the back door, *doras nagaoithe*. The opening and the closing of these two doors is determined by theprevailing wind, and its effect on the draught through the smokeholes. Thus the two doors were very often in Ireland made up of halfdoors, *leath dhoras*, constituting in co-operation with the smoke holes a machinery regulating the fire. In Ireland this is generally a turf-fire which needs special attention in its making, lighting and maintenance. The drawing off the smoke is also of importance.

342 777 Some superstitions connected with these two doors suggest that very old traditions lie behind them. There is a belief in Co. Kerry that it is very unlucky to go in one door and out the other. You must always go out of the door you entered by, otherwise you are supposed to take the luck of the house with you.

342 How the two doorways could be used with regard to the cattle I have shown by an example from Co. Kerry in my article in Béaloideas (op. cit. p. 70).

The two doorways are well-known from the Ancient Irish Laws and the old literature. The inches house and even larger houses had two doorways, a door in one and a hurdle (wattle) in the other (see Ancient Irish laws, Vol. IV, p. 305). O'Carry says that the principal house, even of kings, had but one room to which when the house was of an oblong form there were generally two doors, one opening east and one west. In the round houses on the other hand there seems to have been but one door, which faced south, west or east, and sometimes though rarely north. (O'Curry, Manners and customs of the ancient Irish. Vol. I). In Scottish beehive houses inhabited about 1850 however, there are often two opposite doors, about which Thomas says: "The two doors are a decided improvement, for the one upon the side on which the wind blows — that is, the weater door — is closed with a stone or

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PLATE XLVI

1. Fastening the hay-ropes, when thatching. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.
2. Scollop-thatching. Connemara, Co. Galway.

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

283
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1. Thatched-chimney. Co. Clare.
2. Making hay-ropes. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.
3. Hobwalls carrying the chimney. Toormakeady, Co. Galway.

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[p. 219]

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Donegal

PLATE XLVIII

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1. Fire-place with iron-grate. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.

2. The basket hanging to dry on the southwall of the house. Lough Eske, Co. Donegal.

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[p. 220]

2: Campbell B,E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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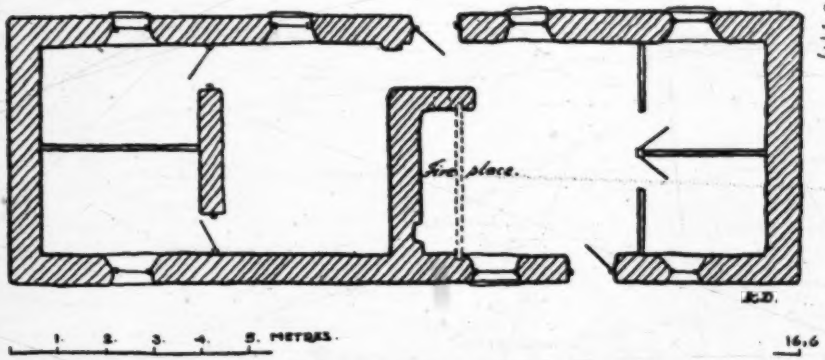

Fig. 5. Entrance-door and fireplace. Cush, Co. Limerick.

The fireplace and the chimney.

Slowly, step by step, or suddenly, by an abrupt innovation the fireplace has developed from its simplest original form, i. e. the placing of the fire directly on the flagstones of the floor. I have never found a fire lying quite free on the floor in Ireland, although I have heard of such fires where one could go round the fire. From Tousist, Co. Kerry, I have heard of houses which had the fire in the centre of the floor, and a casing, *simné*, of woven twigs, *slata fighe*, over it to convey the smoke out through the opening in the centre of the roof. This arrangement has been obsolete here for upwards of 80 years.

In both central-chimney houses and gable-chimney houses of recent time there is always a wall at the back of the firehob. This wall constitutes the endwall, *pinniuir*,[5] of the kitchen in gable-chimney houses. In more newly built central-chimney houses this wall reaches the top of the roof as the stonebuilt chimney is joined to it, but in old central chimney houses it only reaches the same height as the side walls.

The hearth, *teinteán*, is usually at floor level in many parts of Ireland. There is a great variety of hearth-stones: large flags of stone, small cobblestones from the seashore etc. Even round the hearth or fire-place there is a pavement owing to the oldfashioned way of using the fire for cooking. Bits of fire are taken from the fire, and put on the floor round the fire-place, for instance when they are baking in the bastible, and at the same time cooking, or when they wish to leave the tea drawing. Sometimes there can be two or three small fires at the same time round the hearth.

The fireplace thus represents the pure hearth-type, being in direct contrast

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 to the Middle and especially East European fireplace traditions, which are
●354 dominated by the stonebuilt oven. The built-in oven is unfamiliar and unknown to the Irish fireplace, and the Irish types of bread. For baking,
252 which is done every day in Ireland, special utensils, representing very old
354 and original traditions, are used. For baking the griddle bread, *arán greadaille*, the griddle or grid iron, *greadall*, is used. The griddle rests on the tripod, *teannta* or *crann aráin*. In Northern Ireland, bread irons are used, which are not put on the tripod over the fire, but the cake is placed in an upright position supported by the bread iron which is placed before the fire. Very primitive is the method to lean the cake against the bread-stick, *crothnán* or *maide aráin*, which is only a wooden twig of three branches or a three forked root. In Ancient Ireland according to O'Curry (op. cit. vol. I, p. CCCLXIII) the wheatmeal and barley cakes were baked on a griddle, but the oatmeal cakes called *bkocaire* or *blethach* were always baked in upright position before the fire by means of the threepronged fork or stick called *maide an bkocaire* or the *crañachan*.

There is also another certainly old Irish method of bread baking i. e. in
[77] the bastible, *bácús*. When metal stores however are found in peasant houses, they are definitely a late cultural loan from England.

342 Standing at the back of the hearth is one large, thickish flag or often three
354 or more stones forming the hob, *iarta*. In very primitive dwellings I have seen only a couple of rough stones used as hobstones, *leac iarta*. In districts where mud-houses are common a mass or boss of clay behind the fireplace makes up the hob. The pot, *corcán*, or kettle, *citeal*, rests against the hob or hobstones when on the fire. The hob constitutes a protection even for the wall behind.

In Eastern and Southern Ireland and even elsewhere the hob is built up carefully from stone and mortar. An ash corner will be found at the sides of the hob.

In the very primitive stage there is no chimney at all, the smoke finding its way out through the door or a hole in the roof. As I have already mentioned, there can be two smoke holes, one at each gable end of the roof. This is a stage of the black houses very seldom seen in Ireland to day.

At the next stage a kind of basket or wooden chimney is hung over the fire to create a draught, *tarrac*, and to lead the smoke out through the hole in the roof. When there is no chimney but even later, when the chimney has come, to regulate the circulation of air in the kitchen, is is necessary to open and close one of the doors to allow for the changing winds. In the Irish houses the woman who looks after the fire always takes the "wind door" and

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Wicklow

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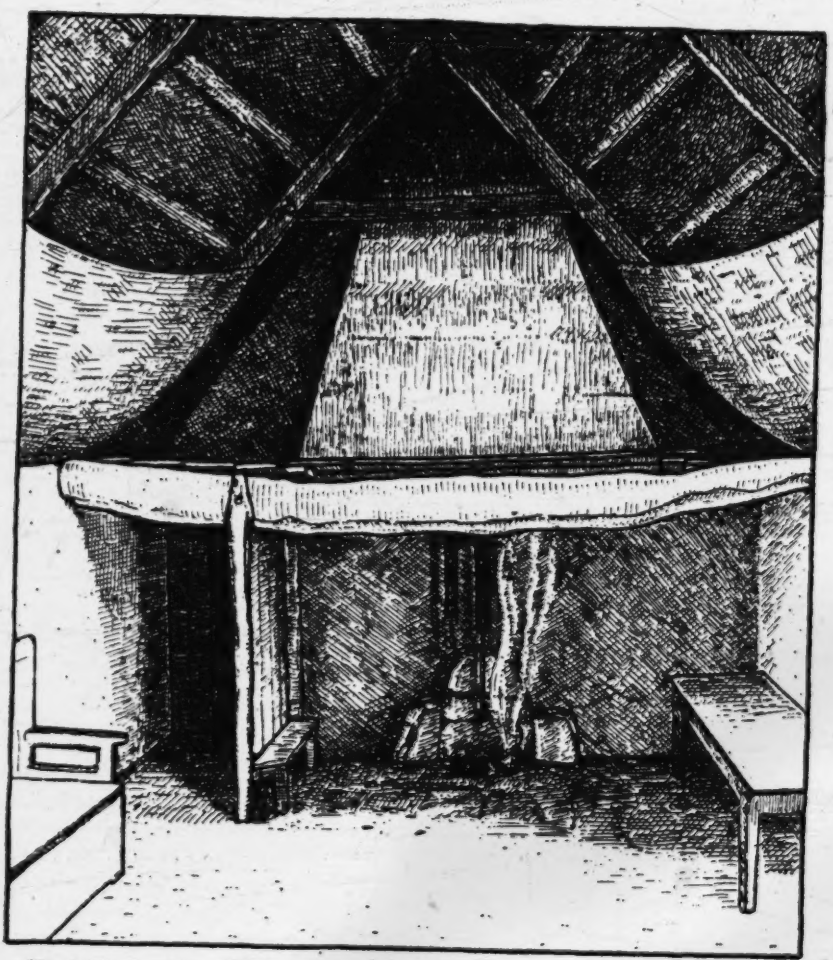

Fig. 6. Wooden side-wall of the fireplace. The kitchen corner. Kyle, Ballinglen, Co. Wicklow.

the "shelter door" into consideration, the whole kitchen being of importance with regard to the fire.

The basket chimney, *síneán,* is plastered with clay inside and outside to resist sparks from the fire. A plaster mixture of clay and calfmanure is said [237] to be very useful. The older chimneys were straight i. e. on looking up from the fireplace the sky was visible above. In later ones the flue, *poll an deataigh,*

2: Campbell B,E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 is bent from side to side to create more draught. The chimney narrowed gra-
●354 dually upwards until the basket, *cis*, on top was reached. In old houses the chimney was not always capped by the basket-like contraption on the outside, for instance not in coastal districts in the North, pl. XLV: 2. The external chimney however is a noteworthy detail. It was now and then of woven rods of twig or willow and it was thatched in some parts of Ireland, pl. XLVII: 1. In other old houses pieces of board were placed on edge in square formation.

The external chimney is sometimes lacking even if there is an inside chimney. In Donegal in places exposed to the wind, I have seen this even in houses with a stonebuilt chimney.

The basket or wooden chimney is supported by two wooden beams resting on the side walls, sometimes however projecting from the gable wall, pl. XLVII: 3. In a later stage there are two pillar walls or hobwalls carrying the basket chimney.

Across the chimney (inside) halfway up or more, a stick of cut tree-branch projects across the chimney. This stick is supporting the chimneyrack or pot-rack, hanger, *drol*, which is an iron bar and hangs down to the fire-level. Another way of hanging pots over the fire is to use the crane, *croch*, a hooked bar of wood (in older times) or iron. Usually the hangers and the crane are combined and in fact there are many hangers hanging at the same time from the crane. Now and then a chain is used as a hanger.

[352] At the side of the fireplace there is a stool, *stól*, or a number of stools, often varying a little in size, but usually very low. Primitive is the block of wood, *bloc*, a section of a tree, used as a stool. This I have seen in chimney-corners in Co. Kerry. There the round stool of coiled hay-ropes, *suidhistín*, also will be found.

The hob or protection wall behind the fire can develop in such a way that it incorporates the two stools at both sides of the fire, so that there will be two stone-built seats.

Also the pier of the fireplace will be built by pilasters on both sides forming a stonebreast, *piléar an teintedin*, on which the wattled or wooden chimney rests.

[352] In the pier, as well as in the stone wall behind the fireplace, in the hob, and underneath the stone-seats, there are small closets or holes used to keep utensils. In Donegal, I have seen a hole in the wall at each side of the fire, the one hole for the woman's snuffbox and knitting, the other exclusively for the man's pipe.

In later times the chimney is often built of stone and when at last the pier

2: Campbell B,E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

or breast, the seats, and the chimney are built of stone, and joined together, the common modern type of Irish fireplace emerges. It can however take on a slightly different form in different parts of Ireland, for instance in Donegal one finds a carved breast and in Southern Ireland it stands straight up at right angles to the floor.

Only the hearth itself has still another stage to pass through in some parts of Ireland. The hearth will be built so that the fire rests in a grate, in late times much elevated and supplied with iron bars. Below is a place for the ashes. This iron grate owes its origin to the fact that in different parts of Ireland, other fuel such as coal was substituted for turf, pl. XLVIII: 1.

To the coal fireplace often belongs the bellows which can be made in different ways such as the hand bellows and the whealbellows. These iron grates and bellows can be found in such forms in Welsh and English houses.

The hearth from the earliest times forms the centre of family activity in Ireland. Here is the rallying point of the people. The fireplace has attracted to itself the seating places of the house, and in earlier times even the sleeping places. The place of honour is the corner seat near the fire, where the guests are invited to sit down. The stone-built seats or the small wooden stools placed at the side of the fire in primitive Irish dwellings are probably the predecessors of the comfortable armchairs found at every West European fireplace, in palace or cottage, where the same tradition of social activity is attached to the fire seats. From the many folk-beliefs connected with the fire and the fireplace, I only notice that in the South of Ireland, on All Hallow Eve, the fire is not allowed to go out and food is placed on the floor for the dead people who are expected to visit the house. This custom seems to indicate that in ancient times the places for eating were in front of the fireplace. In Scandinavia the food for the dead people is placed on the table.

The Cailleach.

From the northern coast of Donegal to Galway bay, but not south of it, I have found the projection outwards with the bed, *cailleach*. The outshot with the *cailleach* is ordinarily put at one side of the fireplace. In a district between Tuam, Co. Galway, and Tubercurry, Co. Sligo, I have found a richly developed *cailleach* tradition. In many townlands nearly every house is fitted with a *cailleach*, and it is not un-common to find a *cailleach* beside the fireplace in the kitchen, continued by a *cailleach* put to the bedroom behind the fireplace. This *cailleach* connects the houses of central and northern Ireland with the primitive houses of Scotland, *both* and *tigh dubh*, where the in-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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CHAPTER VIII.

THE INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE: FIRESIDE AND FOOD.

As we step inside an old Irish cottage, over a threshold of stone slabs or a pattern of small cobble-stones, we tread on a hard mud floor in which we may see, towards the hearth, the "pot hole" where the large iron pot rests when it is lifted off the fire. I have noticed similar holes in the mud floor, with the remains of the round-bottomed pottery vessel inside, near the excavated hearths of Irish houses nearly 40 centuries old. In paved kitchens a block of wood set flush with the flags answers the same purpose or there may be an iron pot rest (Fig. 25). The area surrounding the hearth is always paved, and the fire itself, in the old style, is at floor level. We shall be invited to take a seat at the fire, for this is the place of honour given to strangers: the fireside is both the focus of family life and the symbol of hospitality. The seat may be a stone slab built into the fireplace, so that the social tradition is incorporated in the architecture of the hearth, or it may be a roughly made but sturdy chair, bench or "creepie" (Fig. 26). The low stool not only brings one near fire-level, but keeps one's head out of the peat smoke hanging in the open rafters, while its three legs find firm footing on the uneven floor. Other low stools are made of solid turf or wood—a section of a tree-trunk—or again of coiled straw-rope, while chairs are often made with seats of sugán or of rush. Comfortable high-backed chairs fashioned out of straw in the manner of a

Fig. 25.

Fig. 26.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Armagh

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Co. Armagh. Cottage Hearth with Brace. Derryinver T.L.

Fig. 27. Note wheel-bellows.

Co. Armagh. Cottage Hearth, Jambwall & window. Derrytrasna.

Fig. 28. Note "jamb-window."

[p. 69]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 Ireland, which is the province of the wheel-bellows (Fig. 27)
352 a contrivance which produces a powerful draught under the fire. Another feature of the fireplace is the small keeping-holes (" boles ") in the wall, which may contain the clay pipes or the knitting : they are usually reserved for special purposes and seem to have their peculiar association with either male or female use. The alarm clock is often kept in one of these
[805] recesses—on the south side, I have been told, because that is the side where the sun tells the time—but there are cabins where the rooster is the only time-keeper, his perch being the long pole, or, in the old days, the sugán, which crosses the cabin in front of the fire and which is used in the daytime for drying clothes.

251 Near the fire too is the wooden meal chest or " ark,"
352 where the oatmeal is stored. One of the ancient customs, now
[857] almost dead, is the " tramping " of the meal, the children being periodically placed in the ark, barefooted, to tread it down. Alternatively the meal was stored in a large hogshead immediately behind the chimney, in the " room," where it would be kept dry without taking up the valuable hearth space. Under the brace you may perhaps see a lump of bacon or a dried fish or two, and this is the place where the horse collar is hung in some districts. We shall return to the other fireside gear later in the chapter.

● 354 In some areas, especially in the north and north-west, that is the province of the gable hearth, the brace and canopy are rarely seen, their place being taken by a stone or brick chimney (Fig. 29). It seems probable that houses of the outshot type, at least, never had the brace, which would be difficult to erect owing to the recessed side-wall. There are
352 many problems which require study in this connexion. Where possible the bed, whether half-recessed in its cailleach or not, lies at one side of the fire : alternatively there may be a large settle—often convertible into a bed—against one of the side walls. This is generally a solid piece of furniture, and I have seen some very attractive examples of bog-oak.

The most noticeable article of furniture in the room is the dresser, which though generally of deal and lacking the fine

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Donegal

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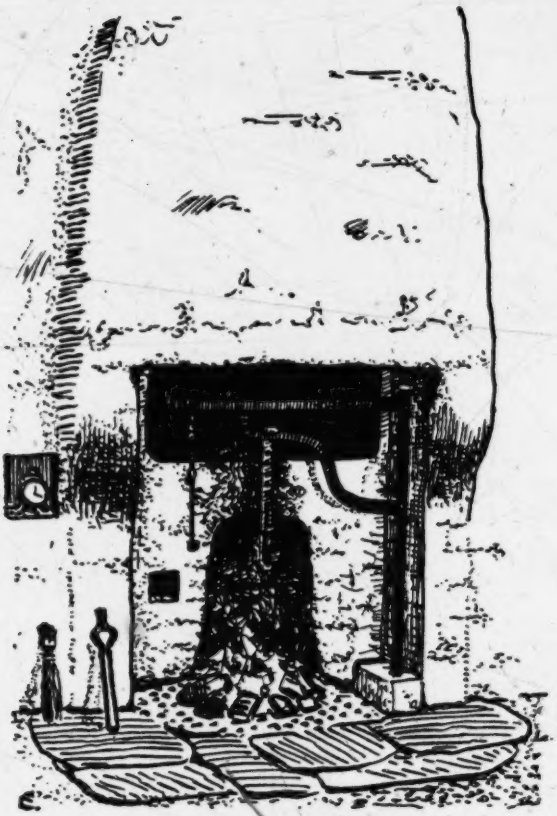

a Donegal Hearth

Fig. 29.—Note keeping-holes, besom, tongs, crane and pot-hanger (crook).

[p. 71]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the side walls so that it is impossible to sit round it. The table is not a centre of social activities and has nothing like the same importance as in an English farmhouse. There are crofters' dwellings in Donegal where no table is used; instead, at meal times, the shallow potato basket or skeehogue (Fig. 31) is taken on the knees of the members of the family as they sit in front of the fire, or an upturned creel may serve instead. Very low oblong tables or trays cut from the solid were formerly used and are occasionally dug up from the bogs. They have holes by which they could be suspended from the wall when not in use, and it may be for convenience of transport during the summer migrations. The potato basket will be seen after meals hanging to dry on the south wall of the house.

Fig. 31.

To understand the fireside appliances and methods of cooking certain facts should be borne in mind—the absence of the brick oven, the use of turf, a slow-burning fuel admirable for stewing and for things requiring a steady heat, and the universal preference for "thin-bread," or "bread in cakes," as English observers called it. Once more we have to remind ourselves that parallels to surviving habits can be found 40 centuries back, for pottery baking slabs are known from Neolithic western Europe and of course oatcakes are best baked in this way. Flagstone griddles were apparently common down to a few centuries ago, and a dated specimen of a bakestone is illustrated in Fig. 33. Though oatcakes are now baked on the griddle, it is not long since they were set upright before the fire after drying a little, and turned frequently. The simple "bread-stick" (Fig. 32) or even a lump of turf may serve the purpose, but in the north of Ireland, where bread seems to have been relatively more important than in

Fig. 32. Co. Galway. Height 1 ft.

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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415 The round-bottomed three-legged iron pots (Figs. 5 and 34), of various sizes from the small porridge pot to the giant 18 gallon potato pot, are descended from the bronze cauldrons of which there are many specimens in the museums ranging in date from 700 B.C. to 1700 A.D. The cauldron was in old times the special property of the head of the house and figures prominently in Celtic mythology and folklore. The pot has been described as the "maid of all work," but boiling potatoes for man and beast is now its main task. The heaviest pots are going out of use with the introduction of raised grates.

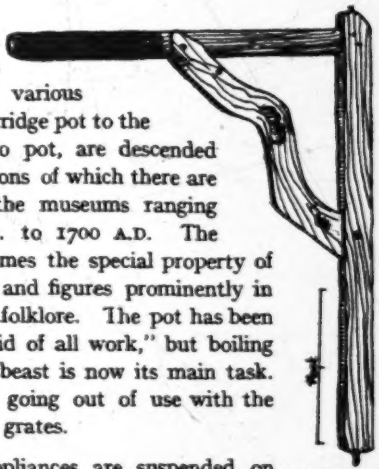

Fig. 36.

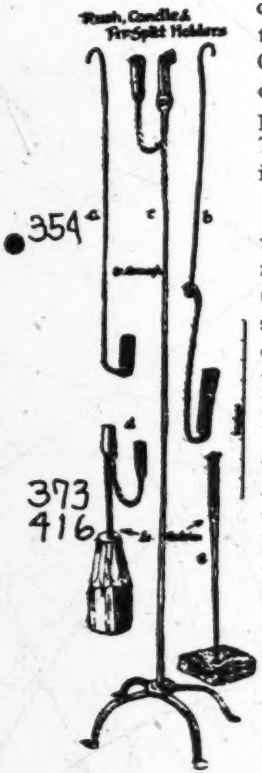

Fig. 37

These various appliances are suspended on the iron crook or adjustible pot hook, to which many different kinds of fittings or "bools" (Fig. 35) can be attached. The crook may simply hang from a bar placed across the chimney, but more commonly from a crane (Fig. 29) which swivels at the side of the fire. A few examples of the wooden crane survive (Fig. 36) By the fireside, too, are kept the short iron tongs or "mudyees" and the heather besom (Fig. 29) which is more efficient than any broom in cleaning among the hearthstones. A goose-wing serves to dust the pots and clean the griddle when baking. Here by the fireside was hung the crusie oil lamp (Chapter 16, Fig. 105) which is another element of the north-western province of European folk-culture and may have its prototype in the famous "hanging bowls" of over 1,000 years ago. A selection of old-fashioned smith-made iron light-holders of different kinds is shown in Fig. 37. There are more elaborate styles, but the charm of these homely appliances lies in their simplicity. The upper figures from Co. Armagh (a and b) show weavers' candlesticks, made for suspension from the loom. Figure (e) is for holding a "split" or thin strip of resinous bog-fir. The others (c and d) are

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894.
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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homespun, buttoned up the back, and reaching well below the knees, until they reach the age of ten or eleven years. The dyes for the homespuns are obtained from plants growing on the islands; the orange used for stockings being got from a lichen (*Ramalina scopulorum*); black and brown from the purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*); blue from a small cruciferous plant; and red usually from imported madder, but sometimes from water-lily roots. Alum is used as mordant.

5. *Dwellings.*—A house consists of a kitchen, and one or two bedrooms; and it is, as a rule, built of dry stones without any mortar, though this is used afterwards for stopping chinks, and plastering the walls internally. Most of the houses are not whitewashed, with the exception of a belt around the small windows, but lime-washed houses are becoming more common than formerly. The house has two doors, front and back, both opening directly into the kitchen; and the windows are situated only on the front of the house; they are of very small size, and seldom made to open; yet, often, small as they are, they are nearly filled up, so as to leave only from six inches to a foot square of glazed surface. The chimneys and fireplaces are of the usual type found throughout the rural districts of Ireland, except that in some cases the chimney, after rising perpendicularly nearly to the top of the wall, turns outwards and opens as a square hole in the gable. The roof is straw thatch, laid on over "scraws" of grass turf, and held down by a net-work of sougans (straw ropes), to the ends of which heavy stones or long pieces of timber are attached. The gable of the house is stepped, so that the thatch when laid on does not project over the end wall, and is sealed down, to prevent water getting under it at this part, by a plastering of clay.[1] The thatch is put on fresh every year, a new layer being laid over the older ones, until the lowermost layer is thoroughly saturated with smoke, and quite rotten, when the whole is stripped off and used as manure. The floor is of beaten clay in the kitchen, but the bedrooms are sometimes boarded. The most expensive material used in building a house is wood, which is very scarce, and is usually obtained from drift wood, washed up after a storm, in which way large beams often reach the islands. It is owing to this scarcity of material, and the people having to build their own houses, that there are so few outbuildings or cattle-sheds, and that the dwelling-houses are so small. The furniture is scanty, and testifies to the poverty of the people. A few

[1] "Houses thatched in this manner are called on the west coast *tighthe croithte*, i. e. 'shaken houses,' in contrast to the *tighthe fuaighte* 'stitched houses,' in which the thatch is tied on by ropes or cords."—REV. E. O'GROWNEY.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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cemented by "dobe" or tempered clay, or sometimes mortar. It 342
generally consists of two apartments, the kitchen and the "room." The kitchen, which is usually of pretty large size, is used as the living room; it has a floor of beaten clay. This room has one, or perhaps, two windows of small size, and seldom made to open. These are always glazed now-a-days, but in the last century they were covered with oiled sheepskin. The house has two doors, both of which open directly into the kitchen, and are situated about two-thirds of the way from the partition wall of the two apartments.

The end of the kitchen farthest from the fire is used as a pen for [231]
the cattle and pigs. The fowl roost where they can, often on the backs of the cattle.

Above the beams or couples in this part of the kitchen boards are sometimes placed, making a sort of loft, in which fishing and boat tackle, agricultural implements, and other articles are stored.

The fireplace is built against the partition wall between the [354]
kitchen and the room. It consists of a stone hearth backed by a "hob," also of stone, built out slantwise behind it to make the fire draw well. This class of house has no chimney, the smoke escaping through a circular hole in the roof immediately above the hearth.

"The room" is a smaller apartment than the kitchen, (measuring about 12 feet by 10 feet) it has one or two small windows, and the floor is sometimes boarded.

The furniture of the house is poor and scanty, that of the kitchen 352
consisting of a bedstead, rudely made up of drift-wood, two posts being driven into the floor, a longitudinal piece uniting these and two cross-beams at head and foot resting by one end on the posts, and having the other built into the wall. Sometimes it is built up into four-poster shape and has curtains. The bedding is composed either of feather ticks, or, with the poorer people, of straw, covered with coarse sacking. The bedclothes are often very dirty. There is a dresser covered with earthenware plates, cups, and jugs of a poor and cheap description, a table, two or three chairs, and a couple of forms or settles. A long straw rope is usually stretched across the apartment to hang clothes to dry on. Worsted when spun, nets, &c., are hung from the couples.

"The room" contains one or two beds of the sort described, a chair or two, a table (in some cases), and a large chest.

The domestic utensils consist of the usual three-legged pot, a 415
griddle, a gridiron, and sometimes a pot oven, a few staved wooden piggins, a boran or sheepskin sieve, and, in the mountains and islands, a quern, now only used usually for grinding barley for cattle food,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

when asked why he had not washed behind his ears, replied "'twas too far west!' Death within the year is said to be the fate in Mayo of the man who lengthens a house by adding to the west end.[1] In the old style, as we shall see in the next chapter, houses of more than one storey are rare, though half-lofts or sleeping lofts in the roof lit by a small gable window are fairly common.

A very general feature throughout the north and west is the presence of two doors in the kitchen, one opposite the other (Fig. 8). Only one—the front door—is in regular use: the back door is reserved for days when the wind 'blows contrairy'. Around it more superstition is gathered. A stranger must not be allowed to leave the house by the back door lest he take the luck of the house with him. In the Aran Islands a corpse was always carried out to the graveyard through the back door, and the front door of all houses in the clachan was closed as the funeral procession passed by.[2] The usual explanation of the opposite doors is that they made it possible to regulate the draught for the open fire. This arrangement is characteristic of pastoral areas in western and southern Europe, such as Andalusia and the Roman Campagna. A seventeenth century visitor to Ireland writes: 'the hearth is placed in the middle of the room. The smoke goes through no particular place, but breaks through every part between the sods and wattles of the house, which commonly is no bigger than an overgrown pigstye, to which they have two doors, one always shut on that side where the winds blow'.[3] When chimney flues were added the dispersal of the smoke was facilitated so that the back door tended to go out of use. Nowadays it is often blocked or converted into a window or wall-cupboard. In the traditional kitchen-byre the flagged passage between the doors served as a path for livestock, and the cow was driven out through the back door after milking. I found an interesting relic of this in Co. Armagh, in the custom of taking every new calf, and also any animals purchased at the fair, through the house for luck. In Kerry, 'down to the present day, some houses are the scene of the

[1] C. R. Browne, *The Mullet*.
[2] A. C. Haddon and C. R. Browne, *The Aran Islands*.
[3] 'A Tour in Ireland in 1672–74', *J.C.H.A. Soc.*, 10 (1904), 96.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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V

HEARTH AND HOME

THE kitchen and the hearth are the very core of the Irish house, and the turf fire burning continuously day and night, throughout the year, is the symbol both of family continuity and of hospitality towards the stranger. When it goes out, it has been said, the soul goes out of the people of the house. The fire serves not only to prepare food and dry clothes, to bring warmth and comfort to the family and to ailing animals, but also to keep the thatch dry and preserve the roof timbers, so that 'when the smoke dies out of a house, it does soon be falling down'. This is one reason for the persistence of single-storey houses open to the roof, where the turf smoke could circulate among the rafters and keep the scraws and under-thatch dry. A 'smoke', in the seventeenth century inventories and to this day among country folk, means a house. In the days before chimneys were adopted the cabins were described as oozing smoke through the thatch so that they resembled 'reeking dunghills'. It should be remembered that the brick or stone chimney flue is a relative newcomer and, as we are constantly being reminded in these days of fuel shortage, a great waster of heat. The chimneyless open fire was much more effective as a house-warmer. The turf smoke, it is true, despite the draught-regulating mechanism of the double doors, must often have been troublesome, but as we shall see the furniture was designed to keep heads low.

Dry peat burns too quickly if the draught is strong, and the fire does best at floor level, glowing on a great stone slab or on a cobbled hearth set in the mud floor. The area immediately around the fire is also paved, but the rest of the old-style

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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353 a wooden plank is set in the floor as a footing for the pot, or to give the spinning wheel a firm base. The upright churn also needs a firm footing and in the Mourne Mountains a movable granite flag was kept for this purpose. I have seen a mud floor in Co. Down with several round holes in which milk was poured [231] for each member of a family of cats. In the Bronze-Age Orkney village of Skara Brae every hut had stone-lined holes sunk in the floor, which were thought to have been used to store limpets.[1] In archaeological excavations near Belfast I have found holes which were presumably used for storing milk-products sunk in the clay floor of an 'earth-house' (souterrain) of the Dark Ages.[2] In some old houses there is a hole near the fire, either in front or let into the wall alongside, which is used to store the ashes.

354 In nearly every example of prehistoric and early historic houses which have been excavated, the hearth occupies a central position, and cooking pots would have been suspended either from the roof timbers or from specially constructed supports. We know from English travellers that this continued into recent centuries. Thus Fynes Moryson: 'the chief men in their houses make fires in the midst of the room, the smoke whereof goeth out at a hole in the top thereof.'[3] He goes on to say that the humbler clay or wattled cabins also had their fires in the middle, and in the early nineteenth century we read of houses in West Antrim where the fire, though not in the centre of the room, was 'advanced some feet from the gable wall so that the persons of the family can readily sit round it.'[4] The description given by Charles Lever of the little cabin of Owen Joyce on one of the Brannocks Islands off the west coast, even if fictional, is worth quoting because Lever was probably drawing on tradition. It reads: 'It was built in a circular form, the chimney in the middle. Certain low partitions sub-divided the space into different chambers, making the centre the common apartment of the family, where they cooked, and ate, and chatted.'[5] In the course of time, however, the fire has come to

[1] V. G. Childe, *Skara Brae*, 17.
[2] E. E. Evans, *U.J.A.*, 13 (1950), 5–27.
[3] Fynes Moryson, *The Description of Ireland*, 231.
[4] G. V. Sampson, *Memoir*, 275.
[5] Charles Lever, *The Martins of Cro' Martin* (1864), 2, ch. 31

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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be placed against the gable or, in the central chimney house, against a partition-wall, and one cannot doubt that the general adoption of chimney flues has been the deciding factor. This innovation, slowly adopted from about the sixteenth century onwards, gave rise in time to many regional styles of chimney breast in brick and stone. I suspect that the wattled smoke canopy (Fig. 18) was the native response to the novelty of chimney flues, but I cannot find that it was adopted outside the areas of strong English influence. The substitution of peat for

FIG. 18. Hearth with jamb-wall and wattled smoke-canopy, Co. Armagh. Meal-bin and settle-bed on left.

wood seems to have made little difference to the architecture of the hearth. When coal came to be burnt, however, the fire had to be lifted off the floor, or the hearth fire given a stronger draught by installing a built-in 'fan bellows' which forced air through a tube into the floor of the fire.

The wattled smoke canopy or brace (? breast) is still fairly common in houses with central chimney and fireside partitions, mainly in the south and east. The front of the canopy rests on a

strong horizontal beam, the brace-tree, which may extend right across the kitchen from wall to wall, four or five feet out from the fire and five or six feet from the ground. Or one end of the beam may rest on a supporting jamb set under one corner of the canopy. In that case—and invariably where the front door is adjacent—there may be a draught screen of wood mud or stone —the jamb-wall—built out from the fireside and terminating in the jamb, so as to partition off the fireside. This curtain-wall is pierced by a small window known as the entry or spy-hole, through which an approaching visitor can be spied from the fireside through the open door (Fig. 18). I have seen a few jamb-wall houses of this type in Co. Armagh where the brace-tree nevertheless continued to the side-wall, so that the visitor had to stoop under it on entering the house. If a door is swung on the jamb-post a small hall or internal porch is readily provided. This is characteristic of developed houses of traditional style in the Lagan Valley near Belfast, and a further refinement is to hang a mirror over the jamb-window, a looking glass replacing the plain glass of the peep hole and reflecting changing fashions. The jamb-wall, called also in Ulster the hollan-wall, is well-known under that name in the south of Scotland and the north of England and may thence have reached eastern Ireland in plantation times. In Cumberland it was termed the sconce and in Lancashire the speer, which was the name of the screen which crossed the end of the halls in the Oxford colleges. James Walton tells me that in north Yorkshire the jamb post, called the witch post, is occasionally found to be covered with designs intended to protect the hearth from evil spirits. Sprigs of rowan are tied to its top for the same purpose. The partitioned hearth is characteristic of eastern and southern Ireland: it extends into the Central Lowlands but it is almost entirely lacking in the west and in the north-western province of the outshot-house to be described below. Dr. Desmond McCourt tells me that he knows of two or three hybrids—having both the outshot and the partitioned hearth—in the foothills of the Sperrin Mountains, where two cultural provinces meet.

The smoke canopy varies in shape and method of construction from one region to another. The commonest type is made of

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

laths and wattles (willow, hazel or briar), plastered with a mixture of clay and cowdung or ashes and coated with limewash. In parts of the south hay or straw ropes soaked in mud (putogs) were used, twisted between a frame of horizontal rungs and plastered over with mud or limewash. In Co. Armagh one occasionally sees a heron's wing hung on the brace: it is used for dusting the hearth. The jamb-walls—and internal walls in general—were traditionally constructed of wattle and daub, or of mud or wood. The wattle and daub construction is undoubtedly an old technique which, in the days of plentiful timber, was much more generally used in house-building. Internal partitions carried up to the roof, however, probably followed the adoption of the chimney flue, and if so this innovation must be reckoned as a contribution to privacy as well as to comfort. We note in passing that wattlework found its last traditional use in house construction in the wicker doors of the west, and in the windbreaks of the north, bundles of hazel or birch branches (wassocks) set up on the windward side of the door. The stone-built external porch must be regarded as a relatively novel addition to the traditional house style.

Wooden or stone seats are often built in near the hearth, and the wall behind the fire, protected by a flagstone or a built-up hob, usually has a keeping hole on each side of the fire (Fig. 19). Known as boles in Antrim and coves in Cavan, these may be elaborated in Achill Island, for example, into two- or three-tier wall-dressers whose ancestry lies in the stone house tradition of the mountain country. There is an old belief that the left-hand keeping hole belongs to the woman and the right-hand one to the man of the house. Here you may see in safe keeping, on one side the woman's knitting, on the other the man's clay pipe. Stone dressers were a characteristic feature of the huts at Skara Brae,[1] where also Professor Childe found evidence that the women occupied the left side of the fire and the men the right. In the Hebridean black-houses the left-hand side of the fire was the woman's quarter.[2] Similarly in the old turf houses of the Highlands, 'the women were invariably ranged around the central fire on one side, the men on the

[1] V. G. Childe, *Skara Brae*, 15.
[2] A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present*, 52.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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352
[354]

FIG. 19. A Donegal hearth, with crane, creepie and bread-iron. Pot and pot-hole on right.

other'.[1] It is interesting to notice that it is the Mongol usage to allot the right side of the yurt to men and the left side to women.[2] We are surely dealing with a very ancient tradition related perhaps to the ordered routine of a pastoral nomadic life. For the Mongols the right and left sides were symbolized respectively by horse and cow. In the humblest Irish farms, [514] which lack sanitary conveniences of any kind, it is customary for the women to use the byre and the men the stable.

If we now turn to the methods of suspending cooking pots 354 over the fire we shall see how the woman's functions are best 821 carried out on the left side. Besides the convenience of this for a normal right-handed person, there lies behind it the notion that for good luck significant actions involving the food supply—such as ploughing, casting a net or taking a pot off the fire—should follow the direction of the sun's movement in the sky. Thus the crane on which the pots are hung is almost

[1] Hugh Miller, *My Schools and Schoolmasters* (1857), 96
[2] E. D. Chapple and C. S. Coon, *Anthropology* (1946), 539.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

invariably pivoted on the left side of the fire so that it swings out with the sun. The iron crane is more characteristic of stone fireplaces than of those with wattled braces, which tend to preserve older methods of hanging. Some of them, indeed, have a large crane or 'gallows' of bog-oak with a long arm pivoting on a massive heel six feet high: I have come across several in Co. Armagh (Fig. 20). One may guess that well-appointed houses of the central-hearth style had some such appliance in early times, turning, perhaps, as do similar hanging-devices in the Roumanian shepherds' wooden *stanas*, on an upright post pivoted in the tie beam of the rafters. Framed within the white-

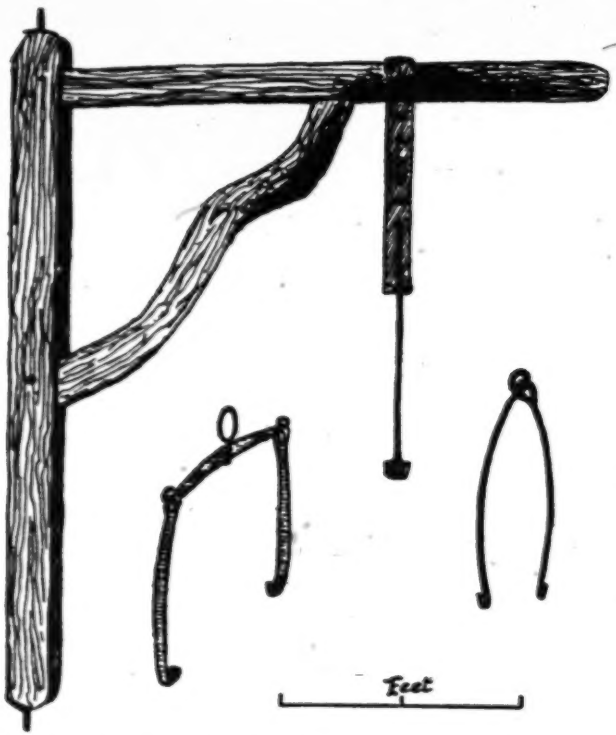

FIG. 20. Bog-oak crane and adjustable pot-hanger, Co. Armagh, with fittings for hanging griddle and pots.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

354 washed jambs of a stone chimney (Fig. 19) the simple wrought-iron crane has the simple beauty of fitness to purpose which most hand-made things possess. The smith rarely attempted the decorative scrolls which were more suited to light objects such as oatcake toasters. From the cranes must hang the mighty iron pots, some with a capacity of 25 gallons, to hold food for man and beast. One hears of examples which were [406] literally 'cranes', fitted with a windlass and chain to lift pots on and off the fire. Such capacious vessels could not have come into use had the fire not been at floor level.

The adjustable pot-hanger which hooks on to the arm of the crane is a simple but effective device for adjusting the height of the hanging pot (Fig. 20). Like so many of the culture-elements we are describing in this book, it apparently belongs to the Atlantic fringes of Europe. While it could be a medieval or later introduction to Ireland, research may show that it is a Celtic trait (fire-irons are a ritual feature of early Celtic cultures) which has found its last refuge in the open hearths of the west. The crane and other fire-irons and the very soot that [372] clings to them have been regarded with superstitious reverence by virtue of their association with fire. Soot carried in the pocket, [484] for example, gave protection on a journey. More ancient in origin than the crane is the hanging chain suspended from a crook-stick and terminating in a movable pot-hook (crook). From existing examples one could work out a plausible evolutionary sequence of hangings from the roof-suspension which can still be seen in the black-houses of the Hebrides. The sequence begins with a wooden peg stuck high in the back wall of the fire, giving way to a transverse bar set parallel to the wall in the smoke canopy, which might in turn become the arm of the crane. These crook-sticks are said to have been made of holly. The long chain of the first example certainly gives more 'play' than the short suspension from a chimney bar, but the peg is more inaccessible and this supports the contention that it is a survival of the long hanging from the roof-timbers over a chimneyless central hearth.

Pots and pans and other hearth-gear we shall discuss in the next chapter, but here we should notice some further architectural fittings of the partitioned fireside. On one side of the

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

canopy, sometimes on both, resting on the brace-tree is a wattled shelf or loft which goes under various names such as, in Ulster, skeagh, hurdle or flake. The double loft in the fireside from Co. Cavan illustrated in Fig. 21 is slatted and floored with reed matting, the reeds being bound together with split briar after the manner of a bee-skep. As the term hurdle would imply, these lofts are frequently made of wattle. The heat could rise through them and keep everything above bone-dry, and this was the allocated place for storing various treasured possessions as well as a great deal of 'trumpery'. Here the rushes were dried in the preparation of rush lights, and here the horse-collar was stored when not in use, a reminder that it was made partly or wholly of straw and must be kept dry.

If we are right in supposing that the wattled chimney canopy is a relatively late feature it follows that we cannot regard the chimney loft as an old element in the Irish house. Yet the loft is a traditional fitting for which there seems to be some evidence in early literature, and the need for storage-space must have led to the utilization of part of the roof space. It seems that the loft over the kitchen which nowadays has often become a bedroom in the roof—lit by a small gable window and entered by a steep stairway or even a ladder—began as a half-loft over the bottom end. This survived in Clare Island into the present century and was used to store tools and dried fish. In Fermanagh the half-loft was the hens' roosting-place, serving to protect the cows from droppings and now transferred with them to the byre. By tradition the loft is the sleeping-place of the children, and the man and woman of the house have their bed near the fire, either in the kitchen or in the bedroom behind the chimney flue.

Nowhere is the relationship between the parental bed and the fire better defined than in the traditional house of the north-west, where a small bed-wing—the outshot or *cailleach*—projects out from one of the side-walls at the chimney-end of the kitchen (Fig. 8; Fig. 12, 3). The distribution of this type of house, north of a line from Cushendun in Co. Antrim to south-western Galway, corresponds with many other north-western cultural distributions, and the area is curiously coincident with that of the oldest rocks in the country, the infertile schists and

 [text continues on p. 71]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Barnstaple in Devon. The oven-pot may be suspended over the fire but in the south rests on a trivet: the lid is dished so that live turves may be placed on top. It is used also for bread-baking, though the griddle is most commonly employed for this purpose (Fig. 24). 415

FIG. 24. Oven-pot, griddle and trivet

Here we come to a fundamental fact in the geography of the Irish hearth—the absence of the built-in oven. The one exception which proves the rule is its occurrence in the extreme south-east, where, in Co. Wexford, the baronies of Bargy and Forth have retained many features dating from their English settlement in medieval times. Over most of Ireland even when a cooking-range is installed in the hearth, the oven is not used for bread-baking, for oven-bread is not a native food. In central Europe on the other hand the bread-oven, originally of clay, is of great antiquity and the stone or metal oven has come to dominate the fireplace. The difference in bread-types is related on the one hand to environment and economic organization and on the other hand to a whole set of eating habits and ethical values. 354 [262] [171]

Thin bread, or bread in cakes, made without yeast, has been from early times the common bread in most parts of Atlantic Europe, from North Scandinavia to the Basque Country, including Highland Britain and Ireland. Farther afield it is typical of many Mediterranean areas and parts of Asia. In north-western Europe it is closely linked with the cultivation of oats, though home-baked wheaten bread is made in the same way and mixtures with maize and with potatoes are similarly prepared. Potato bread (fadge), a mixture of wheat flour and boiled potatoes, is a popular food which surely had its origins in difficult times. 262 252 171

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

chest was considered to be the best place to store a well-dried ham.

Originally the flat round oatcakes were baked on a flat stone, and such flagstone griddles continued to be used in the nineteenth century in parts of Co. Kerry. A late seventeenth-century traveller wrote: 'Their general food is a thin oatcake which they bake upon a broad flat stone made hot, a little sheep's milk cheese, or goat's milk, boiled leeks and some roots.'[1] In Yorkshire the flagstone was built-in over a separate fire and gave way slowly to the iron 'bakestone'. The bread was hardened in front of the fire, resting against a three-legged 'bread-stick' of the type shown in Fig. 25. Representations of bread on the sculptured high crosses of the Early Middle Ages show just such round discs. The traditional form of thin bread, however, is the farl (fardel), shaped like a quarter-circle. The large circular cake is marked with a cross so that it can be readily broken into quarters (farls) after baking and hardening. The 'harning' is done on a wrought iron 'harnen stand' or toaster which has taken the place of the simple bread-stick. It is worth noticing that the Beltane cakes, formerly eaten at the fires which were lit on hill-tops on May Eve, were baked, in Scotland at any rate, before the fire without touching iron.[2] I have seen a few examples of carved stone breadstands which were designed to bake the bread in front of the fire, and no doubt rough stones were originally used for this purpose. The baking stones are elaborately carved and often carry dates ranging, in Scottish examples, from 1674 to 1791.[3] Irish examples seem to be confined to Ulster and they probably represent one of the many culture traits introduced from Scotland (Fig. 25, 6). The wrought iron toasters are tastefully designed and exhibit a great variety of ornament. Specimens from north Ulster and from Scotland display an almost Spanish exuberance in the intricacies of their spiral terminals, and one would like to know if they have their counterparts along the Atlantic coasts of Europe. They are now for the most part museum pieces, for one rarely sees them in use and great numbers have found their way to the scrap heap in the last half century.

[1] 'A Tour in Ireland in 1672–74', *J.C.H.A. Soc.* x (1904), 96.
[2] J. M. McPherson, *Primitive Beliefs in the North-east of Scotland* (1929).
[3] A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present* (1880), 239.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

• 354
415

FIG. 25. Oatcake toasters (harnen stands). The first three 'bread-sticks' make an evolutionary series. They are from Armagh, Galway and Clare. Nos. 4 and 5 are bread-irons from Derry and Down; the latter is fitted with a spit-rack. No. 6 (from Fermanagh) is in stone. No. 7 is an unusual type from Armagh. No. 8 is a toasting fender from Antrim.

252 Among food gatherers such as the Californian Indians we find that wild oats are parched before they are ground in a mortar. A similar custom, known as 'burning the corn in the ear', survived until recent times in Ireland and met with as

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

social and family centre'.[1] The table has never supplanted the fireplace as the focus of social living, a function it has served since the dawn of humanity. As so often happens, folklore endorses this finding: there is an Irish saying that it is unlucky to shake hands across a table. The table or 'board', which in the English language gave its name to a committee, has not replaced the fireside as the place where the Irish countryman talks—and talks business. When food is left out for the fairies or for visitors from the other world it is placed in front of the fire, and at Hallowe'en seats for the returning dead were arranged around the fire.

FIG. 26. Table, cut from the solid, from a Co. Armagh bog. It measures 20 in. by 12 in.

Similarly the fireside, not the table, attracted whatever means of illumination was available. The hob-lamp took the place of the table-lamp. Even when paraffin came in the oil lamp was still hung in the chimney. The older native oils, derived from fish and burnt in open lamps, were very unsavoury, and it was expedient to allow the fumes to escape with the chimney smoke. The iron crusie or open oil-lamp, its shape almost unchanged since classical times, was to be seen nearly everywhere around the coast until late in the last century (Fig. 27) but the paraffin lamp quickly swept it out of existence. Medieval crusies from Spain, Italy and north-western Europe are very similar to recent Irish examples, and it was from the Rhineland, it is said, that the crusie was taken to Pennsylvania, where it first succumbed to the new mineral oil. Stone moulds of uncertain age known from Scotland and Ireland show how the iron pans were hammered into shape. Inland, the place of the crusie was taken by resinous splinters of bog fir kept by the fire till tinder dry,

[1] A. Campbell in *Folk-Liv* (1937), 234.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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373
[416]

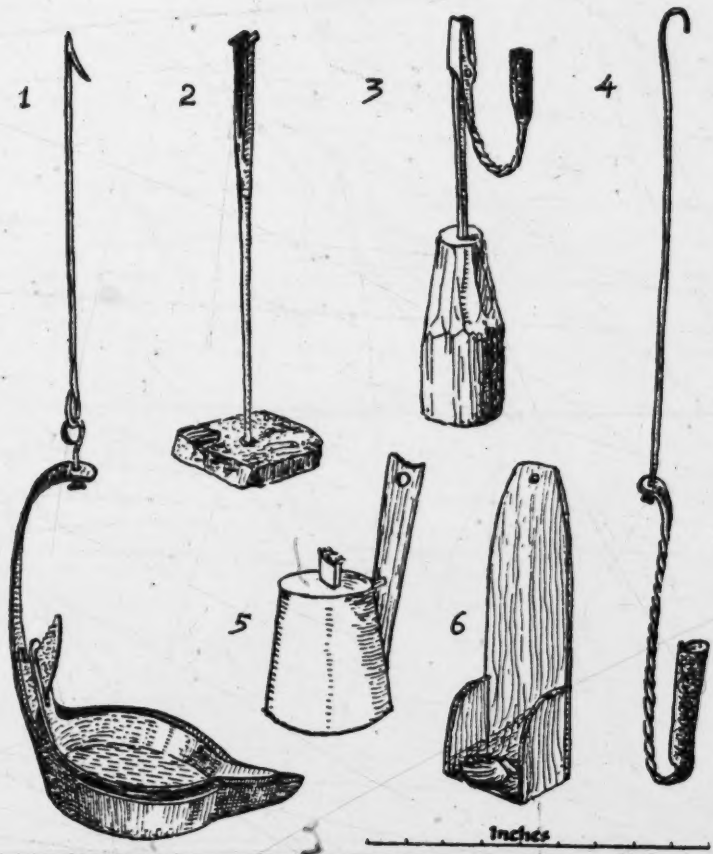

FIG. 27. Light-holders. (1) Crusie, Co. Antrim (scale × 2). (2) Fir-split holder, Co. Antrim. (3) Rush and candle-holder, Co. Antrim. (4) Weavers' candle-holder, Co. Armagh. (5) Hob lamp, Co. Cavan. (6) Scollop shell lamp, Aran Islands.

and by rush-lights held in iron pincers mounted on wooden or wrought-iron stands (Fig. 27). Candles of resin, tallow and beeswax were also made at home by dipping prepared strips of cloth repeatedly in an iron grisset and rolling out the candles on a board. Such candles played an important part in various

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

church festivals and at wakes, and though they are now bought they are made by hand in a few towns by chandlers who carry on a medieval tradition. One Dublin firm, established in 1488, manufactures large church candles of beeswax by methods which can have changed little with the centuries. In the home the candles were supported in wrought-iron holders or stuck into a turf by the fireside. Tall standard holders, often with adjustable fittings, were designed to give light to the weaver at the loom, and they are most typically found in Ulster (Fig. 28). The fine embroidery which occupied the women in the linen districts must have imposed a great strain on the eyes: there are stories of a single candle serving as a central source of light for a ring of seamstresses, each of whom held her work against a bottle full of water which acted as a magnifier.

In Ireland, as throughout Atlantic Europe, the dresser ranks as the most important and elaborate piece of furniture in the kitchen, and its position is prescribed by custom. It stands either against the side wall or against the partition between kitchen and bedroom. Since this partition is of no great antiquity we can be sure that the original place of the dresser was against the side-wall and that it has developed from, and taken the place of, shelves built into or attached to the side-wall. In part of Ulster it is referred to as 'the shelf'. I have already mentioned the tiers of stone shelves set in the wall which are preserved in the deserted houses of the Slievemore cluster on Achill Island. It is believed that the fashion of open crockery shelves was diffused from the court sideboards of the later Middle Ages in France and England, and it may be surmised that the wooden dresser was readily accepted in Celtic lands to replace wall shelves, from Elizabethan times on. The adoption of delph and tea-drinking in the eighteenth century no doubt accelerated the spread of the dresser, which had become, by that time, an essential part of Irish kitchen furniture (Plate 1). The corner-cupboard, evolving in much the same way from corner-shelves, is another article of furniture with a north-west European distribution. Similarly the coffer or store-chest spread through western Europe from the later Middle Ages onwards, replacing skin, straw, hollowed wood, or basket-work containers.

 [Text continues on p. 93]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

582 621 593 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual economic and emotional support.

591 428 342 822 776 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 [198] [177] [65] Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been renovated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder [372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

351 [343] [244] The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access.

342 [262] [264] [415] [198] [352] The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both; and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser," filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

354 [352] [616] [593] [178] The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs, or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

fireplace has a profound psychological significance in Inis Beag and, in a sense, is a force drawing the family together. Now that only three hookers transport peat from the mainland—when in the past there had been more than a hundred—and the price of turf increases considerably year by year, coal or bottled gas stoves are being used by most families. Although coal and gas are cheaper to burn, and coal throws out more heat than turf, the coal fire in the hearth does not foster camaraderie as does the peat fire. The replacement of fireplace by stove and the "stink" and dirtiness of coal are denounced incessantly by the islanders, and the disappearance of the "sweet smell" of burning sods and a multitude of customs associated for generations with the peat fire are lamented.

Many functions are served by "the room." It can accommodate the displaced parents after their son has married, if all agree, for it has a bed which can serve them (as well as distinguished guests, spectators at parties, and now tourists and summer language school students). This chamber is the best kept of the house, with the newest and most valuable of the furniture and often a linoleum floor, and its walls and ceiling are whitewashed or painted frequently. Family heirlooms and objects of sentimental value, which are parted with only as a last resort, are found here. Religious pictures adorn the walls, and on the mantel over the fireplace are photographs of the family going back generations, especially of those who have emigrated or are deceased. When "the stations" are performed every two decades in the cottage, the mass is read in "the room," and certain rubrics used in this ritual are afterward kept here. Finally, the chamber serves as a dance floor when the crowd at a party in the house overflows the bounds of kitchen, hall, and street.

The social universe of the islanders is divided into four segments: close kin or "friends" (Previously, I have used this word in the American sense.), distant kin or "those I have a relationship with," other islanders, and outsiders or strangers. "Friends" normally extend generationally to include ego's parents, grandparents, children, and grandchildren, and collaterally to include his affines (spouse's kinsmen), siblings, and first, second, and third cousins—termed, respectively, "four-of-kin," "six-of-kin," and "eight-of-kin."[1] With the intensification of inbreeding, most of the folk are eight-of-kin, and this is why the parish priest examines the genealogies of families at the time of the match. Marriage between first cousins is forbidden, between second cousins demands permission from the bishop, and between third the consent of the parish priest. Distant kin are relatives extended collaterally beyond eight-of-kin, while outsiders include the curates, teachers who are not islanders, lighthouse keepers, the Dane, tourists of local renown, and, as I have just indicated, even in-marrying women and descendants of recently arrived immigrants (also, of course, inquisitive anthropologists).

Although inheritance and succession are patrilineal on the island, descent is bilateral—traced through both agnatic (father's) and uterine (mother's) lines --with a strong agnatic bias.

[1] These positions are pictured horizontally (generationally) and vertically (collaterally) in block form in Arensberg and Kimball 1940:96 in the chapter "Kinship System." The Irish kinship system is common to peoples of Western Europe and America (the Eskimo type), and much of the kinship information reported by Arensberg and Kimball applies to Inis Beag.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

796
627
782 year during the early morning. The folk visit the church and graveyard throughout the day and are awarded indulgences for their prayers in behalf of souls of the dead residing in Purgatory. In the cemetery, prayers are offered for relatives, one at a time, and then for everyone buried there, those lost at sea, and those who have no one to pray for them. An islander going to the chapel makes a succession of visits inside to pray, retiring to the churchyard after each prayer; an indulgence is granted for every visit, and some children carry small stones and pile them outside of the chapel to keep count of the indulgences thus acquired. It is said of those who remain longest in the cemetery and make the most number of visits to the chapel that they are attempting to mollify the ghosts of relatives whom they treated badly when alive.

796 The 12 days of Christmas commence with the feast of the Nativity on December 25th and end with the feast of the Epiphany on January 6th, and include the feasts of St. Stephen on December 26th, Holy Innocents on December 28th, and Circumcision on January 1st. This is the high point of the year for the folk, even though it is a much quieter period today than it was half a century ago, when social concerns outweighed religious ones. Work is suspended altogether on Christmas and the three days following it and on January 1st and 6th, and during [167] the rest of the period only "light chores" are done. Importance is attached to the [582] 12 days over and above their religious significance and the fact that little work is [574] done; for at this time emigrants return to Inis Beag on holiday; if a marriage is to occur during the year it is likely to be arranged then; at least one party usually is given which attracts most of the adults; and the men gather in the pubs on [521] several nights to sing, dance, and tell stories. For weeks before Christmas, rumors abound as to which relatives will visit the island, who will marry whom, and where the party will take place; these serve to sharpen the anticipation of the islanders and to make them less mindful of the worsening of the weather.

[292] In preparation for the Christmas season, new clothes are fashioned—as at Easter—to be worn initially on the five feast days, and it is usual for a man needing [351] a new *crios* to have it woven in time for Christmas mass. Houses and streets are [356] cleaned and repaired, fireplaces whitevashed, and supplies are taken in for the 12 days as steamer service is curtailed. On Christmas Eve, a special dish of [262] corned ling or cod smothered in sauce is served at "Christmas supper," and large • [364] white candles purchased in the shops are placed on the dining table and in one or more windows of the cottage, to be burned nightly during the 12 days. The sight from the sea of the darkened island with its hundreds of candles rivals in beauty the view of the mainland coast far away on St. John's Eve, when bonfires are [574] lighted as far as the eye can see. Relatives visit one another after Christmas supper, [431] and when the children have been put to bed, stockings are hung above the fireplace and filled by the parents with oranges, candies, ribbons, pencils, handkerchiefs, [861] and toys for the infants. Santa Claus is the gift giver, so infants are taught, and thus he can be used to promote good behavior on their part in the weeks prior to Christmas; this belief seldom persists into childhood, however, as older children [431] are eager to disabuse their younger siblings of it. Adults usually do not exchange gifts, but they receive them from kin and acquaintances abroad to whom they in [262] turn send Christmas cards. On Christmas Day, special cakes and breads are served